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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Wednesday 25 January 1978

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Wednesday, 25 January 1978.

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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Ethiopia-Somalia

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VIETNAM: Site Rep

the Vietnamese have now withdrawn most of their forces from Cambodia, although sporadic clashes continue. Some Vietnamese forces probably still occupy blocking positions inside Cambodia, and Vietnamese patrols still enter Cambodian territory. Although military activity is localized in border areas, the continuing conflict may be starting to have broader domestic economic repercussions for Vietnam.

both Cambodian and Vietnamese spokesmen asserted that Vietnamese troops were no longer in Cambodia. The assertions may be self-serving on both sides; Phnom Penh can boast of "driving out" the Vietnamese, and Hanoi can argue that it has met Cambodia's preconditions for initiating negotiations.

//Military operations have drawn a large segment of the Vietnamese Army away from the armed forces' important peacetime roles of construction, engineering, and transportation. The Army had been tasked especially with developing the so-called "new economic areas" and reclaiming farmland in the south to increase Vietnam's low food production. In addition, the fighting has reduced the attractiveness to farmers and urban unemployed of new economic areas being created near the border.//

EGYPT: Negotiating Tactics

25X1 [] Egyptian President Sadat appears in no hurry to resume talks with Israel, preferring for the moment to keep alive the threat--implicit in his dramatic action last week, when he recalled his delegation from Jerusalem--that negotiations will fail unless Israel and the US modify their positions and approaches to the peace process. Timing is all-important to Sadat now; he must decide when he has secured maximum advantage from the current standstill in talks, yet he must be careful that the situation does not deteriorate into a permanent breakdown.

25X1 [] Two senior Foreign Ministry officials in comments to a US Embassy official yesterday separately repeated the line that Egyptian leaders do not yet think the time is right to soften the Egyptian stance and resume talks. Both officials--who participated in negotiations with Israel--said they saw little value in reconvening either the political or military committees until basic changes take place in Israel's approach.

25X1 [] Both said the break in talks with Israel came because Sadat finally concluded that Israel wanted to retain Egyptian territory and because the US--at Jerusalem--did not support the Egyptian position but instead continued its role of "honest broker." Both added their voices to the now-familiar refrain coming from Egypt that the outcome of Sadat's peace initiative rests with the US.

25X1 [] The officials added a new thought, which may have been intended to intensify the pressure on the US. Both asserted that Egypt's acceptance of Israel as a Middle East state and its concessions on the nature of peace were not irrevocable.

These concessions could be withdrawn or, at a minimum, publicly described as major concessions that Egypt had been willing to make only in return for comparable major concessions from Israel on territory and Palestinian self-determination. [REDACTED]

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USSR - NORTH KOREA: Kunayev Visit

[REDACTED] The visit to North Korea by Soviet Politburo member Dinmukhamed Kunayev from 18 to 22 January was the first such visit by a member of that body since 1971. It may have brought some improvement to the atmospherics of Soviet - North Korean relations, but public remarks by both sides indicate that forward movement on the basic political and economic differences that have troubled the bilateral relationship in recent years was marginal.

[REDACTED] The substantive negotiations were described by the Soviet and North Korean media as "businesslike and fraternal," indicating that there were differences of opinion on some issues. The talks did not result in a joint communique, and no new agreements were announced--another sign that little or no progress was made toward improving ties.

[REDACTED] The talks undoubtedly included the role of Soviet trade and aid in North Korean economic development. North Korea probably made a bid for more Soviet assistance in connection with its recently announced seven-year plan. Bilateral trade relations have been strained in recent years because North Korea evidently has diverted exports earmarked for the Soviet Union in order to help alleviate its heavy debts to Western Europe and Japan. TASS merely reported that the two sides had exchanged views on further development of cooperation between the two countries, suggesting that they were unable to resolve fully their bilateral trade problems.

[REDACTED] Although North Korea enjoys close relations with China, North Korean President Kim Il-song has been anxious to put his relations with the USSR and China on a more even keel so as to avoid overdependence on either ally. Thus, in their remarks on the eve of the Soviet delegation's departure,

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Kunayev and Vice-President Pak Song-chol both noted the particular significance of Kim Il-song's reception of Kunayev and his entourage, the first time Kim has received a Soviet delegation since 1973.

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[REDACTED] During his meeting with Kim, Kunayev presented the North Korean leader with a personal letter from Soviet President Brezhnev and presented him the USSR's Order of Lenin. The North Korean press, however, subtly played down the significance of the award by pointing out that it had been made in April 1972 on the occasion of Kim's 60th birthday. The Soviet press did not mention that fact.

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[REDACTED] There were also implicit differences in the remarks made by Kunayev and Pak in summing up the results of the Soviet visit. Kunayev emphasized his admiration for North Korea's economic achievements while making only a single reference to North Korea's "determination to achieve the peaceful reunification of the fatherland." Pak, chose, however, to stress the "common struggle for victory against imperialism," claiming that the Soviet visitors had extended their support for North Korea's efforts to force the withdrawal of US forces from South Korea and to attain "independent and peaceful reunification" of the Korean peninsula. [REDACTED]

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YUGOSLAVIA: Tito Heir Designated

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[REDACTED] [REDACTED] *Stane Dolanc, the 52-year-old head of the party executive committee, will be designated vice-chairman at the 11th Party Congress in May. Dolanc would in effect become President Tito's heir-apparent for the all-important job of party chairman.*

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[REDACTED] More than a decade ago, he purged his previous deputy in the party, Aleksandr Rankovic, because of what he considered unseemly ambition; since then, he has not come to grips with the succession issue. Tito, 85 years old and subject to nagging health problems, appears finally to have realized that he can no longer delay making preparations.

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[REDACTED] Tito's hand may also have been forced by the need to make a decision before preparations for the Congress have advanced too far. The party leadership would want the decision

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to be accepted before the Congress convenes to ratify it. Last Thursday, Tito presided over a closed session of top party officials and probably informed them of his intentions. The rank-and-file will probably be told at a party plenum scheduled for later this month.

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[] Dolanc will owe his new position as much to fate as to his demonstrated abilities as a capable politician and pragmatic administrator in the position of executive committee secretary. Tito's first choice as his successor in the party's top job was Edvard Kardelj, a close confidant who serves as the regime's foremost theoretician but who has had a history of serious medical problems. Kardelj's health had seemed much better last year, and Tito reportedly was then counting on him to step into the leadership posts.

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[] Early last month, Kardelj was hospitalized for thrombosis in one leg, and his recovery has been slow.

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[] As vice chairman, Dolanc will--initially at least--be no more than first among equals. His status with regard to Tito will be tenuous, as the President is unaccustomed to sharing his political power. Potential rivals can be expected to take advantage of Dolanc's initially delicate position to test his staying power. As an experienced politician, Dolanc is already buttressing his chances by courting the powerful military establishment, whose attitude will be crucial during the succession period. []

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NORWAY: Limit German Troops

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[] Norway has announced that West German participation in the biennial NATO exercises conducted in Norway will remain at this year's level instead of increasing as previously planned. Oslo appears to be bowing to domestic political pressures and to criticism from the USSR and Finland. The government's underlying commitment to NATO remains firm.

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[] //Norway had declared its intention to allow an increase in West German participation from an initial 160-man hospital unit in 1976 to about 1,500 men, including infantry, in 1980 as part of "normalizing" relations with West Germany. The new decision will limit the number of West Germans to 480, this year's level. There will be no combat soldiers.//

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BRIEF

Ethiopia-Somalia

[] There was little new information on the renewed fighting between Ethiopia and Somalia around the northern Ogaden city of Harar yesterday.

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[] A US Information Service employee apparently was informed by Somali Ministry of Information officials yesterday that claims of the Western Somali Liberation Front forces in the Ogaden were basically accurate, except in the contention that the Somalis were reacting to an Ethiopian counteroffensive. The employee was told that the Somalis had instigated the new fighting.

[] Ministry officials apparently commented that they had heard but could not confirm reports that several Cubans had been captured. []

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